

NHS England and NHS Improvement Board meetings held in common

Paper Title: NHS England and NHS Improvement Green Plan 2022-25

Agenda item: 10 (Public session)

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Paper type: For approval

Organisation Objective:

NHS Mandate from Government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Statutory item	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NHS Long Term Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance	<input type="checkbox"/>
NHS People Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Executive summary:

As part of the Board's commitment for the NHS in England to be the world's first net-zero health service, every NHS organisation is required to publish a Board-approved Green Plan.

NHS England and NHS Improvement accounts for 0.5% of the total carbon footprint of the NHS in England. Our Green Plan for 2022-25 sets out what will be done to reduce emissions from the day-to-day business of NHS England and NHS Improvement, and commits to a 44% reduction in direct emissions by 2025.

Action required:

The Board are asked to endorse the Green Plan and give approval for it to be published on our website.

Background

In October 2020, the NHS became the world's first health service to commit to reaching carbon net zero before 2040 for the emissions we control, and achieving an 80% reduction by 2028. Our Greener NHS team provide the leadership across the wider system for this ambitious commitment.

1. While NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) as an organisation accounts for just 0.5% of the total carbon footprint of the NHS in England, we have our own role to play in decarbonising the health service, and it is important that we show leadership in this area.
2. Excluding supply chain emissions, the biggest sources of our own carbon footprint are energy use across our corporate estate (30% electricity and 16% gas), travel (21% business travel and an estimated 12% commuting) and the emissions associated with production and processing of the fuel and energy we use (20%).
3. Our Green Plan sets out what will be done to reduce emissions from the day-to-day business of NHS England and NHS Improvement, and commits to a 44%

reduction in direct emissions by 2025. Our plan is not intended to cover the wider NHS, which continues to be part of the Greener NHS remit.

Actions in our Green Plan

4. The draft Green Plan sets out a series of actions and ambitions across the key areas of opportunity for NHSEI to both make a meaningful contribution towards a Greener NHS, as well as improve work environments and provide better, more climate-friendly offers to staff.
5. Our direct carbon footprint baseline in 2017-18 was 16,810 tCO₂e. An 80% reduction will mean our GHG emissions will not exceed 3,362 tCO₂e by 2028. The interim target of a 44% reduction will mean the our GHG emissions will not exceed 9,414 tCO₂e by 2025.

Estates and facilities

6. As a tenant, our head leaseholders, including NHS Property Services, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), will have an important role to play in our ability to reach net-zero.
7. We will work in partnership to ensure sustainability criteria is considered as part of the options appraisals for any lease events, alongside other factors including the economic, financial and commercial case. We will seek opportunities to increase the use of LED lighting, roll-out sub-metering and increase on-site renewables.
8. Our estate currently operates on renewable electricity tariffs which are backed by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO), and we will explore options for Power Purchase Agreements to provide us with reliable, certified green energy in future. We will also begin to define and agree the minimum standards for our offices of the future, which will include a commitment to minimum Energy Performance (EPC) standards. This will create the benchmark which all corporate offices will need to meet as part of a longer-term estates strategy.

Travel and Transport

9. We routinely track, measure and report emissions from business travel; over the last two years they have been over 90% lower than usual due to the pandemic and home working. Technology has been essential in allowing people to meet virtually during national lockdowns and local restrictions and will continue provide opportunities for people to meet and collaborate in a range of suitable circumstances. We are making a commitment to keep emissions from business travel below 50% of pre-pandemic levels, and where business travel is necessary we will seek to further incentivise active and sustainable travel.
10. To support this, we will update our Business Travel and Expenses Policy to give more prominence to the environmental impacts people should consider

when deciding on travel and transport options, and we will increase the rate of reimbursement for cycling and encourage car sharing by increasing the passenger rate.

11. We will continue to offer salary sacrifice schemes for season tickets and bicycles, and over the next three years we will limit the availability of cars available through our salary sacrifice scheme to those which are zero-emissions; over 60% of our employees' salary sacrifice cars are currently fully electric.
12. We will work with our head leaseholders to ensure we use lease events as an opportunity to improve the infrastructure to support active and sustainable travel at our offices, including the provision of lockers, showers and access to electric vehicle charging points.
13. Our Flexible Working Policy and a shift to hybrid working will also provide opportunities for staff to reduce commuter emissions by making it easier to access off-peak public transport and work from home where and when appropriate.

Workforce

14. We will build capability in all staff and empower them to make informed, environmentally conscious choices. We will achieve this by rolling out the Greener NHS induction module to all staff as soon as it's available. We will also regularly deliver internal communications and campaigns aimed at increasing knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues, our environmental performance and actions that can be taken at an individual level to support our progress to net-zero.
15. A Green Champions network will provide opportunities for staff to discuss environmental issues, share best practice and help embed sustainability locally. We will also explore options to increase understanding and impact across the workforce by providing access to tools, including a smartphone app, which will facilitate mass engagement and reward employees for their environmental savings.

Implementing the Net Zero Supplier Roadmap

16. In line with the Net Zero Supplier Roadmap approved by the Board in September 2021, and building on the roll out of the mandatory 10% weighting for social value and climate change weighting for all non-medicine tenders, from April 2023 we will introduce qualifying criteria so that all suppliers with new contracts for goods, services and works with a contract value above £5 million per annum will be required to publish a carbon reduction plan for their direct emissions. This will expand to all new contracts, irrespective of value from April 2024, although there will be a grace period for VCSE and SMEs.

17. The Green Plan will see renewed commitment to reducing consumer single-use plastics, further reducing the use of paper and switching to 100% recycled paper for all office-based functions March 2024.

Considerations

Strategy implications

18. The Green Plan sets out our intentions to ensure we are aligned to the Greener NHS ambition to be net-zero by 2040 for the emissions we control. Interim milestones of a 44% reduction by 2025 and an 80% reduction by 2028 will provide tangible checkpoints for us to assess our performance and make adjustments where necessary.
19. It also ensures alignment with the Greening Government Commitments, which set out the actions UK government departments and their partner organisations will take to reduce their impacts on the environment in the period to 2025. We are mandated to follow these commitments as an Arm's Length Body to DHSC.

Financial implications

20. The Greener NHS Team have provided funding for staffing to enable the delivery of this plan. No additional programme funding is required beyond this.
21. Where funding for energy efficiency measures in buildings is not the responsibility of the head leaseholder, it will be included in the business case for capital spend for each project prioritised from within our existing capital envelope. Access to grant funding provided by the Government Property Agency will also be explored, for example to expedite the installation of LED lighting. Improving energy efficiency will also lead to savings over time in the form of reduced energy costs.
22. During 2020/21, we saw spend related to business travel reduce by approx. 95% because of the exceptional circumstances related to COVID-19 restrictions. This level of saving is unlikely to be maintained as the amount of in-person working increases and rail fares rise in line with inflation. However, maintaining the use of virtual meetings for the majority of meetings with colleagues in other locations provides an opportunity to lock in much of the benefits made in terms of reduced emissions and travel costs. The financial savings associated with the reduced levels of business travel outlined in our Green Plan would be sufficient to offset the increase in the reimbursement rate for cycle and passenger miles.

Risk analysis

23. As a tenant in our buildings, we are reliant on action from head leaseholders and landlords to make the upgrades necessary to the corporate estate. Government departments are working towards net-zero by 2050; 10 years after the NHS commitment. Over time this could be significant for our largest sites

(Wellington House and Quarry House), although there is no immediate cause for concern.

Next steps

24. Approval of the Green Plan will allow us to further embed sustainability considerations and the assessment of environmental impacts into our operational activity and decision-making processes. Solidifying this commitment as we integrate NHS England and NHS Improvement, NHS Digital and Health Education England will ensure we are showing the leadership required to deliver a net-zero NHS.
25. The integration of our organisations will require a review of the Green Plan to re-baseline our combined emissions and ensure individual Green Plans are consolidated. This opportunity will allow us to create a single plan which is fit for our organisation and compatible with a net-zero future.

Oversight

26. We routinely measure and report our environmental performance and publish an annual Sustainability Report in our Annual Report and Accounts. To ensure the Executive Group can maintain regular oversight of our progress against the net-zero commitments, we will develop a dashboard of performance indicators which will track our progress against overall emissions and key deliverables. This will be updated on a quarterly basis.